

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2013 Yukon River Fall Salmon Fishery News Release # 16

Fall Update # 2, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Fall Season Assessment

The estimated cumulative fall chum salmon total run size through August 4, based on run reconstruction, is 253,000 fish. This is above the historical median of 202,000 fish for that date. The drift test fishery project corroborates the timing and relative passage strength estimated by the Pilot Station sonar project. The department is now using inseason run assessment, based on passage at Pilot Station sonar, to project fall chum salmon run size. The projected 2013 fall chum salmon run size based on median to late run timing, ranges between 700,000 and 900,000 fish.

To date chum salmon have entered Yukon River in two distinct groups with periods of low passage numbers observed in between. The first pulse of fall chum salmon entered Yukon River between July 28 and July 29 and was approximately 93,250 fish. Lower Yukon test fish catches of fall chum salmon have been low the past several days. As a consequence, fall chum salmon daily passages at Pilot Station sonar should be relatively low over the next several days. However, Lower Yukon test fish catches picked up substantially in August 5's morning drifts.

Coho salmon are beginning to enter Yukon River however it is too early to determine run size. The cumulative passage by the Pilot Station sonar project through August 4, based on run reconstruction, is approximately 3,000 fish, which is equal to the historical median for that date.

Lower Yukon River Cooperative Drift Test Fishing – YDFDA, ADF&G

The cumulative CPUE for fall chum salmon through August 4 was 554.22, which is above the historical median of 453.50 for that date. The cumulative CPUE through August 4 for coho salmon was 11.03, which is below the historical median of 18.84 for that date.

Pilot Station Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative fall chum salmon passage through August 4 is approximately 169,000 fish, which is below the median passage of 219,500 fish for that date. The cumulative coho salmon passage through August 4 is approximately 3,000 fish, which is above the median passage of 2,500 fish for that date.

Rapids Test Fish Wheel Project - Zuray

The cumulative Chinook count as of August 4 is 2,700 fish which is above the average of 1,500 fish for this date. The cumulative fall chum salmon CPUE from July 21 through August 4 is approximately 2,000 fish, which is above the historical median of 1,700 fish for that date. The cumulative based on the adjusted water level is also above the historical median for that date.

Eagle Sonar Project - ADF&G

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Eagle sonar is estimated to be approximately 26,300 through August 4, which is below the average of 47,600 for this date. The preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 28,000 to 33,000 fish. A passage of this size would be below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel and would not provide for Canadian harvest share levels specified in the Treaty Agreement.

Salcha River Tower - BSFA

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 4 is approximately 4,900 fish. The escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for Chinook salmon in the Salcha River has been achieved. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is approximately 36,000 which is above the median of 17,400 for this date.

Chena River Tower – ADF&G

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 4 is approximately 1,700 fish. The escapement goal of 2,800 – 5,700 for Chinook salmon in the Chena River has not been achieved. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is approximately 20,200 which is above the median of 6,800 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir – TCC

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 4 is approximately 705 fish which is below the average of 1,079 fish for this date. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is approximately 262,300 fish which is above the median of 94,000 for this date.

Stock Identification

Fall chum salmon genetic samples processed from July 19 through July 29 passage at Pilot Station sonar indicate that stocks represent approximately 5%, 33%, and 16% for Tanana, Border/US (Chandalar/Sheenjek), and Canada respectively. Summer chum salmon made up approximately 46% of the fish sampled during that time period.

Age Composition

The fall chum salmon age composition from the 6" LYTF drift nets through August 5 was 50.9% age-4, 47.2% age-5, and 1.8% age-6 fish. The average age-4 fish is 61.2% for this date and

average age-5 fish 37.8%. Females contributed 54.0% to the samples, which is near the average of 55.2%. The sample size was 490 fish for ages and 499 for gender.

The combined fall chum salmon age composition from commercial harvest periods in District 1 (through August 1) was 58.1% age-4, 41.4% age-5, and 0.5% age-6 fish. The proportion of females in the commercial catch samples was 47.5%. The sample size was 355 fish for ages and 360 for gender.

Fall Season Management

In accordance with the Yukon River Drainage Fall Chum Salmon Management Plan, a total run ranging from 700,000 to 900,000 fish is adequate for escapement needs, full subsistence opportunity, and has a surplus available for other uses. Subsistence fishing is now on the full regulatory schedules in the lower and middle rivers. The lower and middle section of Subdistrict 5-D will be on their full regulatory schedule of 24-hours per day, 7 days per week by 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 8 (see subsistence schedule below).

Additional commercial fishing opportunity will be dependent upon inseason run strength assessment. District 1 commercial fishermen can expect to fish on a Monday and Thursday schedule, while District 2 fishermen can expect to fish on a Wednesday and Sunday schedule. However, this schedule can change. When possible, the department may adjust the timing of the commercial periods as pulses of fall chum salmon are moving through each district.

The fall season commercial salmon fishing season is open in Districts 3 and 4. The fall commercial salmon fishing season in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will open at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 6. Processors, catcher-sellers, or direct marketers should notify the department of their intent to operate in any of these districts and subdistricts by contacting the Fairbanks office at 459-7274.

Fall Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 12, six fall commercial fishing periods have been announced in District Y-1 and five periods in District Y-2.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-1:

Period #5: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 9 hours (6:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. August 1 - August 2), remainder of District Y-1, 6 hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight August 1).
545 fall chum/3,937 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 194 coho/1,191 lbs. (\$1.10/lb.).

Period #6: District Y-1 Set Net Only Area, 9 hours (3:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight August 5), remainder of District Y-1, 6 hours (6:00 p.m. until 12:00 midnight August 5).

The cumulative harvest for Y-1 through August 4 is 43,085 fall chum and 1,308 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 14 fish.

Preliminary harvest information for District Y-2:

Period #5: District Y-2, 6 hours (2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. August 4).

1,337 fall chum/9,294 lbs. (\$0.75/lb.), 271 coho/1,641 lbs. (\$1.10/lb.).

The cumulative harvest for Y-2 through August 4 is 35,613 fall chum and 1,107 coho salmon, and the incidental harvest (not sold) of Chinook salmon is 22 fish.

Summer Season Assessment and Management

All monitoring projects for Chinook salmon have estimated passages well below the historical averages for this date. Cumulative passage at the Eagle sonar is approximately 26,000 Chinook salmon, which is well below the historical cumulative average of 48,000 for this date. The preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 33,000, which would fall well below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel and would not provide for Canadian harvest share levels specified in the Treaty Agreement. The escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for the Salcha River was achieved on July 26 and approximately 4,900 Chinook salmon have been counted at the tower as of August 4. Chinook salmon escapement to the Chena River is projected to be approximately 1,600, which does not meet its escapement goal of 2,800 – 5,700. Additionally, the preliminary escapement estimate of approximately 2,000 Chinook salmon in the East Fork Andreafsky River is just below the escapement goal of 2,100 – 4,900.

The Chinook salmon run is nearly complete in the Upper Yukon as the tail end of the run continues to cross the border. In preparation for the fall season, subsistence fishing schedules and restrictions in Subdistrict 5-D will be relaxed, beginning in Subdistrict 5-D Lower on Tuesday, August 6.

Summer Commercial Salmon Fishing

Through August 4, five summer season commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 6. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest in District 6 through August 4, is approximately 5,281 summer chum salmon.

Period #6: 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 5, until 12:00 noon Wednesday, August 7, to target summer chum salmon. The 42-hour commercial salmon fishing period will coincide with the District 6 subsistence and personal use fishing time.

Subsistence Salmon Fishing

For the current subsistence schedule please call **(toll free): 1-866-479-7387 or in Fairbanks call (907) 459-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: The Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4-A (from $\frac{3}{4}$ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

In District 4, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C: Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 6, Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will be open 5 days per week for subsistence salmon fishing. The subsistence salmon fishing schedule will be from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Subdistrict 5-D has been divided into three separate areas, in an effort to protect Chinook salmon as they pass through this long section of river.

Subdistricts 5-D-Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries): Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, August 6, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen and remain open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and Chinook salmon may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Subdistricts 5-D-Middle (from the Hadweenzic River to the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough and including all adjacent tributaries): Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. Effective 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 8, subsistence salmon fishing will reopen and remain open 24-hours per day, 7 days per week. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less and Chinook salmon may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Subdistrict 5-D-Upper (from the upstream mouth 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Circle, and Eagle. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed. The department will notify fishermen by August 8 concerning when the subsistence salmon fishing restrictions and schedule will be relaxed in Subdistrict 5-D Upper.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 pm Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 pm Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one five day fishing period per week from 6:00pm Fridays until 6:00pm Wednesdays. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Effective Monday August 5, Personal Use salmon fishing in Subdistrict 6-C will be open from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays, and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays. Fisherman may use a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or in Fairbanks at 459-7274. The Emmonak ADFG office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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